

*Lesson Plan / Student Guide*

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**COURSE TITLE:** Racial Sensitivity

**TERMINAL GOAL:** The student will learn what racial sensitivity is and how it plays a role in law enforcement.

**ENABLING OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- 1) Define Racial/Cultural sensitivity
- 2) Identify what implicit bias is
- 3) Identify harmful behaviors and language
- 4) Identify what a microaggression is
- 5) Identify ways we can work towards being culturally aware

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:**

Classroom lecture, handouts, and visual aids (PowerPoint presentation)

**HANDOUTS:**

Student guide

**COURSE DURATION:**

1 Hour

**CURRICULUM REFERENCES:**

1. <https://time.com/4779112/police-history-origins/>
2. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/02/solving-racial-disparities-in-policing/>
3. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_sensitivity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_sensitivity)
4. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-are-microaggressions-4843519>

**EQUIPMENT, PERSONNEL, AND SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

COMPUTER, AUDIO AND VISUAL AIDS; WHITEBOARD

**TARGET AUDIENCE:**

NEW MEXICO LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS – CADETS / RECRUITS

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**INSTRUCTOR RATIO:**

1 / 50

**EVALUATION STRATEGY:** Students will discuss and provide examples of intervention strategies and situations.

**AUTHOR & ORINATION DATE:**

SOUTHWEST TRAINING CONSULTANTS LLC JUNE 2023

**REVISION / REVIEW DATE(S):**

**REVISED / REVIEWED BY:**

**A. Introduction**

- a. US law enforcement was started in places like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia with nonformal night watch patrols starting in 1636. Formal publicly funded organized police forces started in 1838 in Boston, MA. In the South, however, it is identified that some of the primary policing institutions were slave patrols. The first formal slave patrol was created in the Carolina colonies in 1704. During the civil war, the military became the primary form of law enforcement in the South. Still, during Reconstruction, many local sheriffs functioned in a way analogous to the earlier slave patrols, enforcing segregation and the disenfranchisement of freed slaves. (1)
- b. Why is this relevant? Historians and researchers identify that little has changed over the years, and there is a tendency for the justice system to target minorities. "Police patrolled Black neighborhoods and arrested Black people disproportionately; prosecutors indicted Black people disproportionately; juries found Black people guilty disproportionately; judges gave Black people disproportionately long sentences; and, then, after all this, social scientists, observing the number of Black people in jail, decided that, as a matter of biology, Black people were disproportionately inclined to criminality." (Harvard Historian Jill Lapore)(2) We are talking nationally, not one specific location. Still, the inference is that the Criminal Justice System tends to target minorities. The problem is that no one can definitively say it does not. Where does that put us? What are we doing to remedy these concerns?
- c. As we go through this instruction, we will discuss racial and cultural sensitivity. We will identify what implicit bias is, how it affects us, and how we do our job. We will identify harmful behaviors and language. You will learn what a microaggression is. We will also work towards identifying ways we can be culturally aware.

**B. What is racial/cultural sensitivity**

- a. Cultural sensitivity, also referred to as cross-cultural sensitivity or cultural awareness, is the knowledge, awareness, and acceptance of other cultures and others' cultural identities. It is related to cultural competence (the skills needed for effective communication with people of other cultures, which includes cross-cultural competence), and is sometimes regarded as the precursor to the achievement of cultural competence, but is a more commonly used term. On the individual level, cultural sensitivity is a state of mind regarding interactions with those different from oneself. Cultural sensitivity enables travelers, workers, and others to successfully navigate interactions with a culture other than their own. (2)
- b. Racial sensitivity training intends to show how words and actions might impact someone of a different race, religious background, gender, or anyone different from them. Often times a joke is told or a statement made that we will laugh off because we believe the sender of the message had no ill intent. Nonetheless, the words that are spoken affect people. I know a lot of people these days feel our society has gotten soft. We are so worried about

what others think or feel to the point where some might say exaggeration. Have we, or are we just making people aware of how those things make others feel.

- c. The reality is no matter your belief, people should be treated fairly and respectfully no matter their race, nationality, gender, age, or whatever makes them different than you. This is why this training is relevant to law enforcement. The fact is every person you come into contact with should be treated equally. You should never seek out a person based on anything other than the fact that they committed a crime or wanted your attention because of their actions. We need to be racially and or culturally sensitive for several reasons. One it is the right thing to do, and two, building trust within a community is important. We minimize this in Law Enforcement with the mindset of, we got this, but the job of a police officer could be much easier with the publics' help. Could you imagine if people who witnessed a crime stuck around and gave a statement.
- C. What is implicit bias?
- a. Growing up, your parents raised you to be the best person you could be. They taught you the difference between right and wrong. They taught you manners. They did their best to send you out into the world with an understanding of what you needed to succeed. Maybe not all parents, but that was the goal. Somewhere in this, you learned about what your parents believed in, like church or which political party they preferred. You also had a lot of other influences in your life, like friends, neighbors, co-workers, and even the media, all of these things played a role in what you know and believe in. During this time, there are people that have developed an implicit bias.
  - b. An implicit bias is the unconscious favoritism toward or prejudice against people of a particular ethnicity, gender, or social group that influences one's actions or perception.
  - c. The video link below is about Implicit Bias. It discusses what they are and how they come about.  
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?&q=Implicit+Bias+test&view=detail&mid=E126C9FAEB0A84D570A2E126C9FAEB0A84D570A2&FORM=VDRVRV&ajaxhist=0>
  - d. This link is for the Harvard IAT testing battery.  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- D. Harmful behaviors and language
- a. Conversation over coffee is about all the woes of the world. We talk about everything from guns to what sports our kids are playing. We also cuss and discuss the things that bother us. During those conversations, we joke and give each other a hard time about different things. Sometimes those things are personal, but in most cases, it is done to build a relationship, camaraderie. We generally have thick skin, which means most things generally do not bother us. However, the family sitting behind you listens to every word you say, and when you comment on your partner's race, it is not received well. Now the family probably won't say anything or complain, but they will hold resentment, tell their friends, and now have a screwed view of who you are. So what, right, what if some family thinks ill of me? What difference does that make? Oddly enough, when this happens enough, which it does, we
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distance ourselves from our community. The further away we get the harder the job of a police officer will be.

- b. The things we say, the actions we take all affect others. Some are positive some are negative. The problem is when we say things we think don't have significance, because of an unconscious bias, and someone is offended or hurt by such comments. It is often the little things. For example, and maybe not the best, but talking about different foods that might be associated with a particular ethnic background because that is something they might favor. Or discussing a task that can't be handled by a specific gender because they may not have the physical ability.
  - c. When it comes down to it if you make a comment that causes someone to make a face that is not good or you know the comment you made may not be appropriate it probably is not. We need to be aware of how the comment may be received and if there is any question don't make the comment.
  - d. Our behaviors also reflect our thoughts and opinions on things. There has been a time when you were displeased or upset with someone so much so that you just avoided that person. The concern here is that as a police officer you may enforce the law with those implicit bias's, meaning you may have a tendency to seek out those persons of a different race than you.
  - e. Make decisions based on the law. Focus your energy and efforts into making yourself aware of where you are and what you are doing at all times. Also be aware of other officers and correct behaviors that could be questionable. This may be addressing it with them or taking it to their supervisor.
- E. What is a microaggression?
- a. A microaggression is a subtle verbal or nonverbal behavior, committed consciously or not, that is directed at a member of a marginalized group, and has a harmful, derogatory effect.  
(4)
    - i. Micro Assaults
      - 1. Micro assaults are the most overt type of microaggressions. Most often they are done intentionally and the person doing them knows that they are harmful and derogatory. An example would be using a slang term to refer to someone of a particular race, with the knowledge that this term has a derogatory meaning.
    - ii. Micro Insults
      - 1. Micro insults are more subtle than microaggressions. These are usually comments with an underlying meaning or a backhanded compliment. For example, a micro insult might involve saying that someone only got their job because of affirmative action.
    - iii. Micro Invalidations
      - 1. Micro invalidations involve telling a marginalized group that their experiences of prejudice don't matter or that they are being over-reactive or
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too sensitive about the things that are being said. In other words, a micro invalidation might follow a micro assault or micro insult.

iv. Environmental Microaggressions

1. Environmental microaggressions involve something in a person's environment that sends a message of invalidation of a marginalized group. For example, a child who watches a television show and only sees actors of a different race might feel excluded or not represented because of media portrayal.(4)

F. How can we be more culturally aware?

- a. One of the important ways to develop culture awareness is to educate yourself about other cultures. Learning directly from people of different cultures is a fantastic way to get authentic information. But it's important to engage in conversations with others about their cultures in respectful, appropriate manners.(4)
- b. How much do you know about other cultures beliefs and rituals.
  - i. Do you know what Chanukah is?
  - ii. Do you know what a Yei Bi Chei is?
  - iii. Do you know what the celebration of Kwanza is?
  - iv. What is Cinco de Mayo the celebration of?
  - v. What is Juneteenth the celebration of?
  - vi. What is Eid al-adha?
- c. The point to this is to make yourself aware of other cultures, their beliefs, and ideologies so they are seen as people, not their race. At some point the hope is everyone is seen the same way, as a human being, someone who bleeds red.

G. Conclusion

- a. There is a national push to see to it that law enforcement nationwide receive this type of training. There is a belief that some law enforcement officers make decisions based on a implicit bias they have and that bias skews their ability to make good decisions.
- b. The purpose of this class is to make you aware of racial or cultural sensitivity and how we might be better at it.

**COURSE AUDIT**

PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR:

SECONDARY INSTRUCTOR:

SUPPORT STAFF:

DATE(S)/ TIME(S) OF INSTRUCTION:

LOCATION OF INSTRUCTION:

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RECOMMENDED CURRICULUM CHANGES: Identify inaccurate information, outdated information, new information to be added to update material, etc. (Use additional pages if necessary)

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS: (If any portion of the course content was not presented, indicate the specific content here)



Alternative curriculum was taught.

Accreditation number of alternative curriculum:

SIGNATURE

DATE

Primary Instructor

Reviewed by Program Coordinator

Reviewed by

Reviewed by Director/Chief or Designee